

E

199

.W714

✓



Class E 101

Book 1174











# ADDRESS AND POEM,

IN COMMEMORATION OF EPHRAIM WILLIAMS,

BEFORE THE

## SOCIETY OF ALUMNI,

OF

## WILLIAMS COLLEGE.

1855.







# ADDRESS AND POEM

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

447  
570  
SOCIETY OF ALUMNI

OF

WILLIAMS COLLEGE,

AUGUST 14, 1855.

---

Published at the Request of the Society.

---

BOSTON:

T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.

1855.

177

Source unknown

•

# A D D R E S S ,

BY

J O S E P H   W H I T E ,   E s q .

---

GENTLEMEN OF THE ALUMNI:

We have assembled again on this spot, consecrated by the associations of our earlier and better years. For a brief space we have left the cares and clamors of the “work-day” world behind us, that we may renew those pleasant associations, and revive the memories of those happy years.

And it is good for us to be here ; good to lay our offerings anew upon these altars ; to open our ear again to the calm teachings of a pure science and a true philosophy—teachings so often drowned by the hoarse voices of the world ; and feel our pulses quicken with a fresh inspiration, and a returning strength for the toilsome day before us. It is good to stand again in the midst of these handiworks of Nature ; to gaze upon these valleys, “glorious with their summer green,” and these enclosing hills, and shout to them, as with youthful voices, our glad All Hail !

The day, this assembly, and these associations, naturally suggest the appropriate topics of discourse. But from all such I turn away. By a more casual association, the year of grace, in which we live, reminds us of another year, most memorable in our colonial annals, when every village of New England was astir with the notes of warlike preparation, and her bravest and best were girding themselves for a bitter and protracted conflict—the year in which Braddock

was defeated, and Washington arose into the view of the American people—a year ever to be remembered on this ground, as marking the death of him who was the Father of this Town, and the Founder of this College.

I shall make no apology, therefore, for inviting your attention to a simple narration, so far as now known, of the life and services of Ephraim Williams.

EPHRAIM WILLIAMS was a descendant, in the third generation, from the Puritan, Robert Williams, who is supposed to have removed from Norwich, in England, and settled in Roxbury. He was admitted freeman in 1638, and died at an advanced age, September 1, 1693. He left three sons—Samuel, Isaac, and Stephen—through whom, says John Farmer, he became the “common ancestor of the divines, civilians, and warriors, of his name, who have honored the country of their birth.”

Captain Isaac Williams, his second son, was born in 1638, and removed, while yet a young man, to Cambridge Village, afterwards the town of Newton. He was chosen deacon of the church in that town, when it was first constituted, in 1664, with John Eliot, Jr., as pastor. He died in 1707, leaving his homestead and the larger part of his property to his youngest son, Ephraim Williams, the father of the subject of this memoir.

Colonel Ephraim Williams, senior, was born at Newton, October 21, 1691. He married Elizabeth Jackson, the daughter and eldest child of Abraham Jackson, himself the only son of John Jackson, who was the first settler of Newton. Ephraim, who was their eldest son, was born at Newton, on the 24th day of February, 1715. Soon after the birth of a second son, February 24, 1718, the mother died. The two children, Ephraim and Thomas, were immediately taken by their grandfather, Abraham Jackson, to his own home. He adopted and “brought them up under the paternal roof of his own mansion, and gave them a good

education for the time." "Through his liberality they drank freely at the spring of learning, and knew how to estimate its value."<sup>1</sup> At his death in 1740, he left them two hundred pounds, saying that "he had already spent considerable sums for their bringing up and education."<sup>2</sup>

Most deeply do we in this day sympathize with the regrets, often expressed, that so little is known of the early life and training of Williams. It would be an interesting study to trace, in the lines of his noble character, the fire-side influences, the sedulous instructions, and the generous examples of his venerable guardian and instructor. In the absence of any record of these, we are left to such inferences in regard to them as may naturally be drawn from the known character of both guardian and ward.

Abraham Jackson was a man of the Puritan stamp, distinguished for his intelligence, integrity, and devotion to the public good. During a long life, he was a most useful citizen, and an honorable man. In 1706, we find him associated with Isaac Williams on the first school committee of Newton. Of his liberality the records of the town furnish one most interesting proof. On the 14th day of May, 1701, he gave one acre of land, "for the setting the school-house upon, and the enlarging the burying-place, and the convenience of the training-place." A beautiful example, doubtless, of the spirit of his inculcations upon his youthful charge, and fully justifying the historian when he says: "It is quite apparent that the first sprouts of Williams College were germinated in the family of Abraham Jackson, the son of the first settler of Newton."<sup>3</sup> And here, gentlemen, allow me to add that the tree, whose sprouts are thus said to have germinated in the family of Abraham Jackson, has recently been generously watered by one of his kindred who bears his name. I allude to the munificent donation of three thousand five hundred dollars, made during the present year, by Nathan Jackson, Esq., of New York, for the erection of

---

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of Newton, by Francis Jackson, Esq., p. 329.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid.

the building upon the East College grounds, for the use of the Society of Natural History.

As he approached the age of manhood, young Williams found scope for his enterprise and love of adventure upon the ocean. He made several voyages across the Atlantic, visiting England, Spain and Holland. In these voyages, and in his intercourse with general society, he acquired those accomplishments of manner, that knowledge of human character, together with such a fund of general information, as well prepared him for his future career.<sup>1</sup> He continued this mode of life until about the age of twenty-five.

In the year 1739, his father had removed, with his family, to the Indian town of Stockbridge. His family was one of the four English families designated by the Provincial Government to settle in that place, in aid of the mission to the Stockbridge Indians, which had just been commenced by the Rev. John Sargeant. At the earnest solicitation of his father, Williams abandoned a sea-faring life, and removed to Stockbridge. Here he purchased large tracts of land, and resided for several years, an active and useful citizen of the infant settlement, and often its agent at the General Court. But the time had arrived for his entrance upon more responsible duties.

From the close, in 1725, of the predatory war, known as the "Jesuits' or Rale's war," for a period of nearly twenty years, the settlements of Massachusetts had enjoyed repose. Still, the evidences were not wanting that the spirit of revenge and the lust of blood had not departed from the bosoms of their savage neighbors. Having left their hunting grounds on the Connecticut and its tributaries, under the pressure of the disasters suffered in King Philip's and the subsequent wars, and sought new homes in the North and West, the remembrance of their former seats still remained, and kept alive and glowing the feelings of deep indignation and hate against the intruders. And it needed only the opportunities which a war between France and England

---

<sup>1</sup> Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. viii. p. 47.

would afford, to let loose again their fierce hordes upon the feeble frontier settlements.

These opportunities were too soon to be offered. On the 29th of March, 1744, Great Britain declared war against France and Spain. It was proclaimed in Boston in June. "At the declaration of war," says Gen. Hoyt,<sup>1</sup> in his invaluable narrative of the times, "many Indians who had been active in the former war, and who resided about the frontiers on the Connecticut, suddenly left their stations, and repaired to Canada to join the hostile tribes in that quarter—often firing upon the houses of the frontier settlers as they commenced their march." "Perfectly acquainted with the topography of the country, they were employed during the war, not only on predatory excursions of their own, but as guides to other and more distant Indians."

Planning their expeditions in Canada, their war parties, destined for the Northern and Western settlements, moved down Lake Champlain to Crown Point, or to Whitehall, up the Otter and Wood Creeks, through the wilderness of Vermont, to the highlands; whence, in smaller parties, they passed down the White and Wells Rivers and the head-streams of the Deerfield to the Connecticut; or to the Hoosick, and up that stream to the base of the mountain.

To guard against these invasions, the Provincial Government authorized the construction of a cordon of small forts and block-houses across the highlands, from Fort Dummer on the Connecticut to the valley of the Hoosick at the base of Saddle Mountain. Principal among these were Fort Shirley in Heath, Pelham in Rowe, and Fort Massachusetts. There were also block-houses in Bernardston and Coleraine, and small works at Pontoosuck, Stockbridge, and Sheffield. Forts Shirley, Pelham, and Massachusetts were erected in

---

<sup>1</sup> Antiquarian Researches—now out of print. A new edition is much needed. Gen. Hoyt was an able antiquarian. At his death, he left a valuable memoir, in manuscript, of the campaign of 1755, in which Col. Williams fell. May we not hope for its early publication?

the summer of 1744,<sup>1</sup> under the superintendence of Ephraim Williams, Jr., who had received a captain's commission, and was intrusted with the command of the line of defences upon the northern frontiers west of the Connecticut. His headquarters were at Fort Massachusetts. His superior officer, as well as personal friend, was John Stoddard, of Northampton, Colonel of the Hampshire regiment. Thus was Williams first made acquainted with the valley of the Hoosick, destined to the end of life to be the theatre of his labors, and the object of his cares and affectionate regards.

As he climbed the Hoosick mountain, in his route from Deerfield, and stood with his little band upon yonder western summit, how different the prospect which greeted his vision, from that which lies in silent beauty beneath our eyes! Thickly upon the valley and the surrounding hills stood the ancient forests—a part of the vast wilderness which stretched westward to the lakes and northward to the river of Canada—and unbroken, save here and there by a clearing on the bank of the river, through which the bright waters gleamed in the sunlight, and where the rude native had once planted his favorite maize; and tracked only by the ancient war-path of the Mohawk, which bordered on the stream and crossed the Eastern mountains.

Excepting the single dwelling of the first settler of Charlemont, the nearest abodes of civilized men were at Deerfield on the East, at Stockbridge on the South, and the Dutch settlements on the Hudson. In this exposed position—pushed far into the wilderness—on the beautiful meadow in Adams, now owned by Clement Harrison, Esq., Williams and his hardy companions erected their fort of logs, surrounded with pickets of squared timbers driven into the ground so as to form a continuous fence, mounted with a few iron guns, or swivels, and defensible against musketry alone. The garrison at this time numbered fifty men, while a less number served for the other and smaller works. Rev. John

---

<sup>1</sup> Mass. Military Records, Vol. vii. p. 155.



Norton, who had been settled at Falltown, now Bernards-ton, was chaplain ; and Thomas Williams, the brother of Ephraim, a distinguished physician at Deerfield, was surgeon.

Feebly, indeed, can the present generation conceive of the hardships endured by these brave men, one hundred years ago. Besides the regular garrison duty, small scouting parties were continually ranging the woods from fort to fort, or penetrating far into the northern wilderness, to discover the Indian trail, intercept and defeat their war-parties. It was a service most exhausting and hazardous. Armed with his gun, hatchet and scalping-knife, with his provisions and blanket on his back, the hardy soldier scoured the woods in quest of the savage foe, prepared to meet him with his own weapons and on his own ground. Every tangled thicket was the place of ambush, and the tomahawk and scalping-knife ever gleamed before him. From its exposed position, the garrison of Fort Massachusetts had their full share of this adventurous service. Being now thirty years of age, with vigorous health, bold, active and vigilant, Captain Williams shared fully with his men the privations and dangers of the service, and exerted his best powers in defence of the frontiers.

In the spring of 1746, having received a Captain's commission in an expedition planned by Governor Shirley against Canada, he enlisted a company and joined the forces which had assembled at Albany, with the view of proceeding by the way of Lake Champlain. While absent on this service, Fort Massachusetts was invested on the 20th of August by eight hundred French and Indians, commanded by M. Rigaud de Vaudreuil. After a gallant defence for twenty-eight hours, by Sergeant John Hawks, of Deerfield, with only twenty-two effective men, the garrison was forced to surrender for want of ammunition. The fort was destroyed, and the prisoners taken to Canada by the way of Crown Point. Among the prisoners was Benjamin Simonds, who

is still remembered by the aged people of this town as one of its earliest settlers and most influential citizens.<sup>1</sup>

The appearance of a formidable French fleet on our Eastern coast caused the projected invasion of Canada to be abandoned. The troops were withdrawn for the defence of Boston ; and Captain Williams returned to his command on the frontiers. Fort Massachusetts was rebuilt and garrisoned with one hundred men. As heretofore, it continued to be the object of frequent attacks. Many a sharp conflict was had with the wily enemy, who lurked in the surrounding hills, ready to pounce upon the unwary soldier who strayed beyond the guns of the fort.

A single instance, as related by General Hoyt,<sup>2</sup> may be given. On the 2d of August, 1748, four men being fired upon at some distance from the fort, Captain Williams sallied with thirty men. After driving the enemy about forty rods, a party of fifty Indians in ambuscade suddenly fired, and endeavored to cut off his retreat. By a quick movement he regained the fort, with one man killed, and two wounded. At once a large body of three hundred Indians and thirty French advanced and opened their fire upon the fort. After sustaining a sharp fire from the garrison for two hours, the enemy drew off with their killed and wounded.

Peace was declared at Aix la Chapelle, October 18, 1748. The war did not close in the Colonies till the following summer. On the cessation of hostilities, the forces on the frontiers were reduced, small garrisons being retained at Forts Dummer and Massachusetts. From this time, Captain Williams resided on the Connecticut, at Hatfield, and with his brother Thomas, at Deerfield.

With a rising reputation as an officer, with great dignity of person and manners, he found ready admission into the highest circles of rank and influence, in that aristocratic period, and numbered among his intimate friends and associates the leading men in the county,—such men as John Worthing-

---

<sup>1</sup> Ant. Researches, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 252.

ton, of Springfield ; Joseph Hawley, of Northampton ; Oliver Partridge and Israel Williams, of Hatfield ; and Jonathan Ashley, the minister at Deerfield—men who had no superiors in the Province.<sup>1</sup>

But he did not forget the valley of the Hoosic and his companions in arms. Much of his thought and effort was devoted to them. Mainly through his influence with its leading men, the General Court on the 18th of April, 1749, appointed a committee, consisting of Colonels Dwight and Choate, and Oliver Partridge, Esq., “to survey and lay out two townships on Hoosick River, each of the contents of six miles square, in the best of the land, and in as regular form as may be, joining them together ; and return a correct plat of said townships ; and also to return the course and distance of said towns from Fort Massachusetts.”<sup>2</sup>

The survey was made in October following, and the report of the committee returned on the 10th of November. The committee say, that “in the West township there is not so great a quantity of intervale, but a very valuable and large tract of land in the middle of the township, insomuch that the committee do esteem the West township the most valuable.”<sup>3</sup>

Captain Williams remained at Boston during the session of 1749–50, urging forward the settlement of the new townships.<sup>4</sup> As the result of these efforts, a committee was ordered on the 17th of January, 1750, to lay out the West township into sixty-three contiguous home lots of from thirteen to fourteen acres—each lot being entitled to one sixty-third part of the township. After reserving one lot for the first settled minister, one for the support of the ministry, and a third for the support of schools, the committee were directed to dispose of the remaining sixty lots to actual settlers, for £6 16s. 6*d.* each, and upon the usual conditions.<sup>5</sup> The committee are also directed “to grant as many lots

---

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of Williams Family, p. 235.    <sup>2</sup> House Journal.    <sup>3</sup> Mass. Records, Towns, Vol. iv. p. 532.    <sup>4</sup> Memorial of Williams, Mil. Records, Vol. vii. p. 761.    <sup>5</sup> Mass. Records, Towns, Vol. iv. p. 532.

to the soldiers of the garrison of Fort Massachusetts as they should think proper.”<sup>1</sup>

On the 16th of February, also, a grant of one hundred and ninety acres of land, in the East township, was made to Williams himself, on the condition that “he erect and finish for service, within two years, a good grist-mill and saw-mill on the North Branch of the Hoosick River, and keep the same in good repair for twenty years.”<sup>2</sup> The mills were erected, and Williams became owner of the large meadow upon which the fort was built.

The committee proceeded without delay to the work of settling the West township. Sixty-three lots, fourteen rods wide, were laid out on a broad street running from Green River to Hemlock Brook, and sixty of them disposed of to purchasers by lot. Of these lots, more than one half were taken by the officers and soldiers of Fort Massachusetts, Captain Williams himself drawing lots numbers eight and ten. Several of the proprietors removed their families, and commenced the work of settlement immediately.

Thus it appears, that these sister towns, in the upper valley of the Hoosick, are the foster-children of Fort Massachusetts, and may look to Ephraim Williams as their founder.

But the progress of improvement was soon to be stayed. Clouds began to roll up the northern sky, portending approaching war. The marshaling of the causes which preceded the coming contest; the intrigues of European courts, and their long struggles for dynastic ascendancy on the one hand, or for the maintenance of the balance of power on the other, drawing within their vortex the affairs of the new world,—these belong to general history. Sufficient however may be said, to show the necessity which urged the men of that day to enter with full purpose of heart upon the old French and Indian war.

---

<sup>1</sup> House Journal, Feb. 7, 1750.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The peace of Aix la Chapelle was but a hollow truce,—a mere cessation of arms. The combatants ceased to fight, for want of breath. Mutually exhausted, they were glad to adjourn the final and inevitable contest for supremacy in the New World, till there should be renewed strength, and circumstances more auspicious of success. The stipulation to restore mutual conquests, and recognize the boundaries as defined by the treaty of Utrecht, bore severely upon New England. She gained nothing, and lost much. She was forced to relinquish Louisburgh, which had been conquered by her prowess, and was of immense importance as a security to her Eastern border. While Crown Point, which had been built in 1731, within the territory of the Six Nations, without their consent, and in contravention of the treaty of Utrecht, still remained in the possession of France. We shall soon see her reasons.

With her colonies seated on the banks of the St. Lawrence and the Father of Waters, and claiming, by the right of prior discovery, the region drained by these rivers, she had formed the design of shutting the English colonists within the eastern slopes of the Alleghanies. This purpose she did not propose to relinquish.

To secure the passages to the Western valley, Du Quesne, the Governor of Canada, devised a series of fortified posts to extend from the Lakes to the Ohio. Lake Champlain, as we have seen, was already secured. Fort Frontenac on its Northern shore, and an armed sloop launched in 1751, gave him the preponderance on Lake Ontario. Niagara, heretofore a trading-house, was fortified; and in 1753, there followed stations at Erie, at Waterford on the French Creek, and at Venango on the Alleghany; and, in the spring of 1754, the strong fortress at the forks of the Ohio called in honor of its projector, Fort Du Quesne. The Virginia troops driven from the spot, and Washington forced to surrender at Fort Necessity on the 4th of July, and the chain was complete.

On the other hand, England had granted charters, extending westward from sea to sea. On the arrival of peace, her colonists, with adventurous feet, were pushing through the mountain passes towards those golden regions of whose marvelous fertility and boundless extent strange stories were told by the hunter and trader.

Thus the colonists of the two rival and hostile nations, different in race, different in religion, and different in civilization, stood face to face upon the borders of the valley of the West, with conflicting claims, which the sword must decide. The prize an empire—a continent. Who shall win?

The French were feeble in numbers and in wealth. Yet they had unity; unity among themselves, and unity with the government at home. They had the possession of the territory in dispute. Above all, they had the favor of the Indian. With that wonderful tact and discernment of character, that facility and power of adapting himself to circumstances, however diverse, which never deserts the Frenchman—and especially with the powerful aid of the Jesuit missionaries, those indefatigable professors of an elastic faith—the French had acquired an influence over the rude sons of the forest which their more sturdy and less facile neighbors could never attain.

With the single, although important exception of the Iroquois confederacy, the numerous tribes which traversed the vast regions watered by the St. Lawrence and the Ohio acknowledged the king of France—the great Onontio—as their father. And even of the Iroquois no inconsiderable numbers, seduced by the wiles of the Jesuits, had left their council fires on the Mohawk, and settled upon the St. Lawrence.

With the English colonists were greater numbers and superior wealth; a higher intelligence and purer morals; a manly feeling of individual responsibility and that sturdy love of freedom which a Protestant civilization always insures.

But they were also divided into numerous independent Provinces, often with discordant policies and clashing interests. There were disputes with the royal governors and jealousies of the government at home, and an utter want of union either of councils or of action with reference to matters of common concern. Besides, through the most culpable neglect, the Middle and Southern provinces had allowed themselves to be forestalled in the occupation of the Ohio, and hemmed in, as we have seen, by the French. As was truly said in Parliament, they were enclosed in a net, with both ends in the hands of the French, who had but to pull the cords at a favorable moment to toss them into the sea. It was no longer a question of territory beyond the mountains, but of actual existence on the shores of the Atlantic.

At this critical juncture, the Middle and Northern Colonies, now fully aroused to their danger, sent Delegates to a Congress at Albany for the purpose of securing a closer alliance with the Six Nations, and also of devising some plan of united resistance against the common enemy. Here, after an animated conference, the "covenant chain" was solemnly "renewed and brightened" with the Iroquois;<sup>1</sup> and in the month of July, Franklin's celebrated plan of union—that morning herald of the more perfect Union under which we live—was presented and adopted. This plan shared, however, the singular fate of being rejected for precisely opposite reasons, by the parent and colonial governments.

Meanwhile, the Indian allies of the French, scenting the war from afar, had commenced hostilities on the borders of Pennsylvania and New England. In this quarter, in the months of May and June, attacks were made at Stockbridge and at Dutch Hoosick. Several persons were killed, and much property destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

Immediate measures of defence were adopted. Forts Dummer and Massachusetts were strengthened, and their garrisons increased. Between them a series of stockades was

<sup>1</sup> Doc. Hist. N. Y., Vol. ii. p. 579.

<sup>2</sup> Hoyt's Antq. Res. p. 263.

renewed on the line of the Deerfield, instead of Forts Shirley and Pelham ; while at the West additional works were built at New Framlingham, now Lanesborough, and at West Hoosick, but a few rods from the spot where we are now assembled. As in the previous war, the command was intrusted to Ephraim Williams, who now held a Major's commission in the second Hampshire Regiment, which was commanded by Israel Williams, of Hatfield.

The Colonies determined to prosecute the war, thus commenced, with their utmost vigor, and upon an extensive scale. The plan adopted embraced three principal expeditions, to be conducted simultaneously in the following spring. The first and most important, against Fort Du Quesne, was committed to Edward Braddock, Major General and Commander-in-chief of his Majesty's forces in America, to be supported by two regiments of the line, and the provincial troops of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. The second was against Niagara ; Governor Shirley, second in rank to Braddock, was commander, with two royal American regiments, his own, and Sir William Pepperell's, each one thousand strong. The third, against Crown Point, was intrusted to the provincial troops of New England and New York. William Johnson, of Mount Johnson, on the Mohawk, was appointed to the command. \*He was General Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the colonies, and wielded a powerful influence over the natives, especially those of the Six Nations. It was hoped his appointment would draw many of them to his standard, and perhaps detach their cousins in Canada from the French.

On the 18th of February, 1755, the General Court of Massachusetts resolved to raise five thousand men for the war. They empowered Governor Shirley to enlist twelve hundred men for the Crown Point expedition, whenever the other Provinces should agree to raise their respective proportions, as determined by the Congress at Albany.<sup>1</sup> The propo-

---

<sup>1</sup> Military Records, Vol. viii. p. 335.



sition of Massachusetts was assented to by the sister Colonies. Shirley issued his proclamation on the 26th of March.<sup>1</sup> The troops were enlisted in three regiments of four hundred each, and commanded severally by Timothy Ruggles, of Worcester; Moses Titcomb, of Essex; and Ephraim Williams, of Hampshire. Colonel Williams and his staff received their commissions on the 29th of March.<sup>2</sup>

The expedition was popular, and the regiments were speedily filled. That of Williams comprised ten companies. His own company was commanded by John Burke, of Bernardston. On his staff were Seth Pomeroy, of Northampton, Lieutenant Colonel; Noah Ashley, of Westfield, Major; Thomas Williams, of Deerfield, Surgeon; and Perez Marsh, of Dalton, Surgeon's Mate. William Williams, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was his Aid; and the venerable Stephen Williams, of Longmeadow, was Chaplain.<sup>3</sup>

The regiments — known as the “new levies” — were ordered to rendezvous at Albany. They encamped on the Eastern bank of the Hudson near the last days of June. They were soon joined by the levies from the other colonies, except New Hampshire. Phineas Lyman, a distinguished lawyer, of Suffield, Connecticut, with the commission of Major General, was second in command to Johnson.

The army numbered about three thousand men. They were without regular uniforms, clad in the homespun and home-dyed garments of the New England farmer of that day. Their weapons were the long hunting gun, and the Indian scalping-knife. They had never seen a bayonet, and knew nothing of the discipline of regular troops. On parade they presented a sorry spectacle to the drill sergeants of the old world. Yet, they were inured to hardships. They were familiar with danger. Most of them had seen hard service in the perilous scout and the bloody encounter. They had

<sup>1</sup> Military Records, Vol. viii. p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> Muster Rolls, in Military Records.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

come forth again to fight, not for glory nor for fame, but for the hearth-stones they had left behind, and the loved ones around them—for the altars of their God and his pure worship. On many a head-stone in the peaceful burial-places of New England, the traveler may read the lines—"He fought bravely on the Northern frontier, in defence of his country and his religion."

Johnson joined the army in July. He called his first council on the 12th, and by its advice, ordered General Lyman to march with one thousand men, up the Hudson,<sup>1</sup> "to the Carrying place, or Colonel Lydius' house, in order to open and clear the roads, make bridges, build magazines and prepare rendezvous for the rest of the troops and artillery." Lyman reached the Carrying place on Sunday, the 3d of August, and commenced building a fort, which was first called Fort Lyman, but since known as Fort Edward.

On the 14th of August, General Johnson, accompanied by Colonels Titcomb and Williams, arrived at the fort with the remainder of the army and twenty pieces of cannon, two of them thirty-two pounders, and a small party of Indians.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Learning from a party of Mohawks that the Governor of Canada was preparing to meet him, with eight thousand men at Ticonderoga, or at the head of the lake, Johnson called a council on the 24th, (of which Williams was one,) which advised him to send pressing requests to the Colonies for reinforcements, and also to proceed to Crown Point by the way of Lake St. Sacrament. Working parties were sent out to open a road; and on the 26th he set out with fifteen hundred men and two hundred wagons, and, after a fatiguing march of three days, arrived at the head of the lake, a distance of twenty miles. At the southern extremity of this peaceful water—resting in solitary beauty in its rough casket of mountain and forests, but soon to be dyed with the

---

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript Minutes of the Council, in possession of Dr. William B. Sprague.    <sup>2</sup> Diary of Capt. John Burke.    <sup>3</sup> Minutes of Council in Massachusetts Military Records. Vol. viii. p. 500.

blood of many a fearful encounter—Johnson cleared the ground and formed his encampment.

On the second day after his arrival, Johnson gave to this beautiful lake—hitherto known to the English as the Lake of the Iroquois—the name of Lake George, in honor of the King of England.<sup>1</sup>

On the 30th, Hendrick, the famous Mohawk sachem, entered the camp with one hundred and seventy warriors; and on the 3d of September, General Lyman came up from the Carrying place with the heavy artillery and the remainder of the army, leaving the New Hampshire regiment and five companies of New York troops to complete and guard the fort. Johnson had now nearly three thousand men, including Indians, fit for service, and awaited the arrival of batteaux from the Hudson for the transportation of his troops down the lake.

It is time to look at the enemy. He had not been idle. On the 19th of June, six veteran regiments of France landed at Quebec, having escaped, with the loss of two transports, Admiral Boscawen, who waited for them near the banks of Newfoundland. With them, as commander-in-chief, was M. De Dieskau, a German Baron, who had distinguished himself as a brave and skillful officer in Flanders.

Dieskau's first object was the capture of Oswego. Arriving at Montreal on his way, he found the whole country filled with alarm by the reports of Johnson's invasion. With great difficulty the Baron was persuaded to change his purpose and proceed down Lake Champlain. He landed at Crown Point, with three thousand men, on the 14th of August, where he waited fifteen days for Johnson's approach. On the 2d of September, he moved down the lake to Ticonderoga.<sup>2</sup> There an English prisoner informed him of John-

---

<sup>1</sup> Letters to Gen. Lyman and The Board of Trade.

<sup>2</sup> For this and the subsequent movements of the French troops, *vide* the reports of Dieskau, his aid, Montreuil, and the Gov. General of Canada, to the French minister.—New York Documents, translated by Dr. E. B. O'Callaghan.

son's march towards Lake George, and that the unfinished fort, at the Carrying place, was guarded by five hundred men, who were encamped without the walls. This post taken, and the way was open to Albany, Johnson's communications cut off, his army shut up in the mountains, and forced to fight at a disadvantage, or to surrender at discretion. Dieskau's resolution was taken. And early the following morning he moved towards the fort, with a picked force of fifteen hundred men. Two hundred and twenty were regulars of the Queen's Regiment and Languedoc, six hundred and eighty Canadians, and six hundred Indians led by the famous one-eyed warrior, M. St. Pierre. Of the Indians, three hundred were French Iroquois, and three hundred Abenakis, or St. Francis Indians, who were accompanied by Father Andrau, a Jesuit missionary. Leaving his batteaux at South Bay, he marched on the morning of the 6th, through the woods—his men carrying eight days' provisions—and halted at night, fifteen miles from the Hudson. His plan was to reach the fort at nightfall of the 7th, rush to the attack, and carry the place by storm. But the Iroquois, who acted as guides, fearing, or pretending to fear, the guns of the fort, proved treacherous and misled the Baron. When too late to return, he found himself four miles out of his way, on Johnson's road to Lake George. He encamped in the present town of Kingsbury, at the south end of the precipitous mountain, called, from the events of the following day, French Mountain.

Late at night, two wagoners, who had been taken prisoners, informed him of Johnson's encampment without entrenchments, fifteen miles distant at the lake. At once he offered to his Indians the alternative of attacking the fort in the morning, or of marching against the English camp. They chose the latter. At break of day the army was in motion ;—the regulars in the road, the Canadians and Indians on either flank, "marching through the woods and on the mountains." At nine o'clock they reached the head of the

narrow valley, or ravine, which opens towards the north. At this point—about three and a half miles from the lake—the hills on either side close in, leaving only space for the rivulet, known as Rocky Brook, at their base ; while the road ran along the slope of the western hills, a few rods distant from the bottom of the valley. Here, a prisoner informed the Baron of the near approach of a large force on their way to Fort Lyman. He halted, changed his order of march, and prepared for battle. The Indians and Canadians were ordered to deposit their packs with a guard, and throw themselves forward into the woods, on either flank, so as to form a deep ambuscade. The Iroquois, supported by a part of the Canadians, occupied the crest of the hill on the left, with directions to advance far enough to fall upon the enemy's rear. The Abenakis and the remainder of the Canadians lay in the ravine below the road, on the right. The regular troops, with the Baron at their head, occupied the road, in front. Thus posted, they waited in silence for their unsuspecting enemy, with orders to hold their fire till he was completely inclosed, when a volley from the regulars, in front, was to be the signal for the onset.

But it is time to return to his less active opponent. For ten days Johnson had waited for the arrival of transports and stores, and had neither entrenched his camp, nor taken any other measures to guard against surprise.<sup>1</sup>

On Sabbath morning, the 7th of September, some Indian scouts came into camp with the intelligence that they had discovered the trail of a large army, marching in three columns from South Bay towards Fort Lyman. Instantly a council was called, which resulted in an order to Colonel Williams to "build a picketed fort sufficient for a thousand men."<sup>2</sup> Williams immediately commenced clearing the ground, and preparing the materials for the fort.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Williams's Letter. Johnson's Report to the Governors. Doc. Hist. N. Y. Vol. ii.    <sup>2</sup> Minutes of Council, Johnson's Manuscripts, N. Y. State Library.    <sup>3</sup> Johnson's Second Report Mass. Mil. Rec. Vol. viii. p. 537.

While this work was going forward, his venerable chaplain preached beneath the forest shades, to those who were unemployed, from the words—alas too prophetic—of Isaiah: “Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the mountains.”<sup>1</sup>

A party of wagoners, who had deserted, two of whom had been captured by the enemy, returned to the camp at midnight, and reported Dieskau’s position. Johnson waited till morning, and then called another council. Hendrick, the Mohawk chieftain, was invited to attend. It was agreed to send one thousand provincials and two hundred Indians in search of the enemy. Johnson, at first, proposed a smaller number, and asked the opinion of Hendrick. He replied, “If they are to fight, they are too few; if they are to be killed, they are too many.” When the general proposed to divide them into three parties, the old chief, putting three sticks together, said, “These you cannot break; take them one by one, and you will break them easily.”<sup>2</sup> The party was not divided.

Colonel Williams was appointed to the command, and led the van of five hundred men, composed of his own regiment, and volunteers from the other regiments of Massachusetts. Lieutenant Colonel Whiting, of New Haven, a brave officer who had done good service at Louisburgh, was second in command and brought up the rear.

It was a calm, bright morning of the 8th of September. The sun poured his unclouded splendors upon the still lake and the wooded hills, yet untouched by the autumnal frosts, when the brave provincials filed from their rude camp into the road. The old Mohawk sachem, “with gray hairs and flashing eye,” mounted a stage, and poured forth, in “thunder tones,” a torrent of untutored eloquence—such as had been wont to stir the hearts of his dusky warriors on the eve of battle. “Such,” said Colonel Pomeroy, “was the

<sup>1</sup> Williams’s Biography, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Jos. Burt to Dr. Dwight. Travels,

Vol. iii. p. 343.

fire of his eye, the force of his gestures, the strength of his emphasis, the apparent propriety of his inflections, and the natural appearance of his whole manner, that although I did not understand a word of the language, yet I was more deeply affected with this speech than with any other I had ever heard.”<sup>1</sup>

The route of Williams led up the ravine, already spoken of, having the French Mountain on the left, and a range of hills with a less elevation and a more gradual rise on the right. Having proceeded two miles, he halted for Whiting and Hendrick, who were at some distance in the rear. Flanking parties were thrown into the woods; and while in this position, a herd of frightened deer rushed down the valley, between the men, but excited no suspicions.<sup>2</sup>

Hendrick, mounted on a small horse, came up and took the lead with his Mohawks. The road soon left the bottom of the ravine, and gradually led up the hill-side on the right. The ground became rough and steep and was covered with thick woods. At the distance of another mile, and already within Dieskau's ambuscade on the hill, Hendrick said to Colonel Williams, “I scent Indians.” Williams halted his front rank for a few moments, to allow his files, which were stretched along the road, to close up.<sup>3</sup> Hendrick continued to advance until he was deep within the ambuscade, when he was accosted, doubtless by a friendly Iroquois.<sup>4</sup> “Whence come you?” said he. “From the Mohawks.” “Whence come *you*?” “Montreal,” was the reply.<sup>5</sup>

At the same moment, two Indians on the left, perceiving the hesitation of the English, discharged their pieces;<sup>6</sup> when suddenly the deep valley below rung with the terrific yells of the Abenakis and Canadians, who opened a heavy fire upon the Mohawks, and the front of Williams's column. The Mohawks stood their ground and fought bravely until Hendrick

<sup>1</sup> Dwight's Travels, Vol. iii. p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> Ant. Researches, p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson's Second Letter.

<sup>4</sup> “The Iroquois showed themselves.”—

Dieskau's Report.

<sup>5</sup> Hoyt, p. 274.

<sup>6</sup> Report of Gov. Gen.

fell—shot though the back—when they were thrown into confusion. The dying chief, with an Indian's pride, spent his latest breath in lamentations lest such a death might leave a stain upon his memory.<sup>1</sup>

Williams, comprehending his position at a glance, ordered his men to take to the woods, and gain the eminence on their right. No sooner was this movement commenced, than a murderous volley from the Iroquois on the hill strewed the ground with the dying and dead. Williams, who was standing upon or by the side of a large rock, near the road, received a bullet through the head, and fell dead upon the spot. John Morse, late of Washington, in this county, was standing by his side, and was covered with the blood of his dying commander. With the aid of a comrade, he safely concealed the body from the scalping-knife of the advancing Indians.<sup>2</sup>

The fight now became general. From the hill above and the ravine below, with discordant cries, the enemy pressed upon the astonished provincials, whose ranks, encumbered with the retreating Mohawks, crowded the road. Colonel Whiting pressed forward to support the front, which was now desperately engaged with the enemy on either side. Here the conflict was severest. The provincials did not yield the ground without a fierce struggle.<sup>3</sup> Most of the slain fell at this spot. Here the enemy lost M. St. Pierre, their brave and renowned Indian leader.<sup>4</sup> Finding himself nearly surrounded by superior numbers, who had command of the ground, and his men rapidly falling around him, Whiting wisely ordered a retreat.

The provincials withdrew from the hill and made a stand in the rear of Bloody Pond—thus named by this day's baptism—and held the enemy in check for some time. Forced again to retreat, they kept up a galling fire upon their

---

<sup>1</sup> Dwight, Vol. iii.      <sup>2</sup> Morse's Relation to the late Dr. Shepherd.

<sup>3</sup> "The English stood their ground."—Gov. Gen. to French Minister.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



pursuers, from behind rocks and trees, till they were met by a reinforcement of three hundred men, sent out to cover their retreat. They entered the camp at eleven o'clock, and took their places, and shared with their comrades the subsequent conflicts of the day.

Thus closed the fatal fray, known to our fathers as "the bloody morning scout."

Justice to the comrades of Williams would seem to require that we follow them through the stormy and triumphant scenes which closed the day. But I must pause. Dieskau's rapid advance; the bold and confident attack; the obstinate struggle till night-fall between disciplined valor and native courage; the heroism of Lyman; the death of Titcomb; the sad fate of Dieskau, carried, wounded and bleeding, upon a blanket, into the camp which he had so confidently expected to capture; the final repulse of the enemy, and their gloomy retreat in broken masses at midnight over the rugged Eastern mountains to South Bay,—from these my wasting hour warns me to turn away. They are fully set forth in the accurate description of Hoyt, in the glowing pages of Dwight, and in the well compacted periods of Bancroft.

The day opened upon the provincials with defeat. It closed with victory—the first victory on our soil of raw recruits over the bayonet and regular discipline. It was not the last. On the morning of the 10th, a large party left the camp to bury the dead in the ravine. Of the two hundred and sixteen who were slain during the day,<sup>1</sup> one hundred and forty were buried, who fell in the morning.<sup>2</sup> The Mohawks, who led the van and were most exposed, suffered most severely in proportion to the numbers engaged. Thirty-two were slain, including Hendrick, their leading sachem.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Perez Marsh's return, makes the killed 216—wounded 96. Lieut. Col. Pomeroy's letter, Sept. 10, makes the killed 191 English, and 40 Indians. An original return signed "P. W."—Peter Wrazall, aid to Johnson—in the possession of Dr. Sprague, makes the killed 120, wounded 80, missing 62—exclusive of Indians.

<sup>2</sup> Capt. Burke's letter to his wife.

Hendrick was one of the most remarkable men of his day. He was the son of a Mohegan father and a Mohawk mother, and married the daughter of a Mohawk chief. By his courage and prowess, his superior sagacity and eloquence, he had risen to the highest position in his tribe—the leading one in the Iroquois Confederacy. He was their chief speaker at the Congress of 1754, at Albany, and boldly reproved the English for their supineness in resisting the encroachments of the French. He protested against the sale of rum to his people; and asked for aid to build a church, “with a bell in it;” “which,” said he, “together with the putting a stop to the selling of rum, will tend to make us religious, and lead better lives than we do now.”<sup>1</sup> He was the unwavering friend of the English, and carried in his pocket a captain’s commission from the king, at the time of his death. He was over sixty years of age, with “white locks and very corpulent.” His death was deeply lamented by the English.<sup>2</sup>

Of the provincial regiments, that of Williams lost the greatest number. It was more than decimated. Forty-six were killed, and twenty-six wounded. Ten commissioned officers were slain: besides the Colonel, there were Major Ashley, Captains Moses Porter, Jared Ingersoll, and Elisha Hawley; three Lieutenants and two Ensigns. Josiah Williams, a brother of Ephraim, received a severe wound from which he never fully recovered.

Elisha Hawley had served under Williams, as his second in command, at Fort Massachusetts. He was shot through the lungs, and brought into camp, where he died a few days after the battle. Moses Porter was from Hadley. His fate was a cruel one. Being overtaken on the retreat, he was seized, bound to a tree, and hacked in pieces by the Indians.<sup>3</sup>

Colonel Williams was not mutilated.<sup>4</sup> He was carried by

<sup>1</sup> Records of the Congress. N. Y. Doc. Hist. Vol. ii.  
<sup>2</sup> Dwight’s Travels, Vol. iii.    <sup>3</sup> Hoyt. Antiquarian Researches.

<sup>4</sup> This appears from the relation of John Morse to the late Dr. Shepherd,

his mourning comrades to the height of land, some fifteen or twenty rods in a south-easterly direction from the rock where he fell, and buried at the foot of a "huge pine beside the old military road." On the rough hill-side, beneath the forest shades, his remains have rested, without a memorial, and "undisturbed, until about twenty years ago, when his nephew, Dr. William H. Williams, of Raleigh, N. C., disinterred and carried off the skull." The ancient pine has fallen, and nothing but the stump remains. Yet two descendants of the parent tree, of vigorous growth, have sprung from its roots, and still shade the place of burial.<sup>1</sup>

The rock upon which he fell, still stands by the ancient road. It is an irregular quadrangle, and about seven feet in height. On this rock, by your command, a marble monument, twelve feet high, with appropriate inscriptions, has been erected during the present year, and surrounded with a substantial iron fence. Long may it stand, to tell the passer-by the brief story of the life and your regard for the memory of EPHRAIM WILLIAMS!

The father of Colonel Williams died at Deerfield in the autumn of 1754, leaving to him, as the eldest son, the larger portion of his estate.

When about departing from Deerfield to join the army, Colonel Williams requested his brother Thomas to aid him in drafting a will,—giving no intimations, however, of his intentions in respect to the disposition of his property. From motives of delicacy the request was declined, and the matter was dropped. At Fort Massachusetts he again met his old companions in arms, and gave them his last words of

---

and from the fact that his watch and sword were preserved. These are now at Williams College,—having been presented by the late Dr. S. W. Williams, of Deerfield.

<sup>1</sup> Letter of E. W. B. Canning, Esq. Mr. Canning, as chairman of the committee of the Alumni of Williams College, superintended the erection of the monument to Williams, and explored the ground carefully. He says: "Directed by an aged man who dug up the skull, I found the grave, and had it refilled, and a large pyramidal boulder set over it, with the inscription, 'E. W. 1755.'"

counsel and encouragement. Tradition informs us that, at the parting interview, some slight expressions fell from his lips, of the purpose to leave to them, in the event of his death, more substantial tokens of his regard. At Albany he was reminded, by illness, of the uncertainty of life, and of his cherished purpose, yet unfulfilled. His will was made and executed on the 22d of July, John Worthington and Israel Williams being appointed executors. After appropriate bequests, in small amounts, to relatives and personal friends, the will proceeds as follows :

“It is my will and pleasure that all of the residue of my real estate, not otherwise disposed of, be sold by my Executors, or the survivor of them, within five years after an established peace, (which a good God soon grant,) according to their discretion ; and that the same be put out at interest, on good security ; and that the interest money yearly arising therefrom, and the interest arising from my just debts due to me, and not otherwise disposed of, be improved by said Executors, and by such as they shall appoint Trustees for the charity aforesaid after them, for the support and maintenance of a free school in the township west of Fort Massachusetts (commonly called West Township) forever ; provided said township fall within the jurisdiction of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and continue under that jurisdiction—and provided also the Governor of said Province, with the Assembly of said Province, shall (when a suitable number of inhabitants are settled there) incorporate the same into a town by the name of Williamstown ;—and if the interest of such monies be more than sufficient for such a purpose, that which remains be improved, as aforesaid, for the support of a like school in the east township, in which said fort now stands ; but in case the aforesaid provisos are not complied with, viz : if said West Township fall not within said Massachusetts Province, or do not continue under that jurisdiction, or if it shall be incorporated by any other name than that above mentioned, then my will is that the interest of said monies be applied to

some other public beneficial and charitable purpose, by my Executors as above directed, respecting other parts of my estate, according to their discretion and good judgment."

The Executors accepted the trust, and managed the fund—originally less than five thousand dollars—with great skill and fidelity. In 1785, upon their petition, a charter was granted, and a Free School established in Williamstown. Thus thirty years after his death, and two years after the peace of Paris—an "established peace," of which he had not dreamed—the generous purpose of Williams was accomplished. "On this foundation in 1793, arose the College which bears his name."

Thus, Gentlemen, I have presented to you, as clearly as I have been able, whatever is now known of the life and services of EPHRAIM WILLIAMS. I need not be told how meagre and unsatisfactory the narration has been. No man is more fully aware of this than myself. But if the record of his acts be unsatisfactory, still more so is that of his modes of thought and feeling, of his habits and personal character. After no inconsiderable search, I have not been able to find any thing from his own pen which reveals to us his principles of action, and his views upon the great subjects of life, duty and destiny. For whatever is known of these, as well as of his personal appearance, habits and manners, we are indebted to the impressions which he made upon his contemporaries, as revealed in the scanty notices of the times, and in the few traditions which yet linger amongst us.

From these we learn that his "person was large and fleshy," his countenance benignant, and his presence commanding; that he loved, and excelled in, the rough games and feats of agility and strength, so common in his day, and often engaged in them with his soldiers, during the intervals of duty; that his "address was easy, his manners simple and conciliating;" that he loved books, and the society of

literary men, "and often lamented the want of a liberal education;"<sup>1</sup> that to these endowments were added the higher qualities of mind—quick and clear perceptions, a solid judgment, a lofty courage, and an unwavering constancy in scenes of danger, and that military genius which needed only a fitting opportunity to place him in the highest walks of his profession. He knew both how to command and how to conciliate the affections of his men. "He was greatly beloved by them while living, and lamented when dead." And finally, in the language of Colonel Worthington, who knew him well, "Humanity made a most striking trait in his character, and universal benevolence was his ruling passion." He truly adds, "His memory will always be dear."

Colonel Williams was never married. He died in the forty-first year of his age;—cut down in the pride and strength of his manhood; in the midst of his useful and brilliant career; and at a juncture when broader fields, inviting to still higher achievements, were opening before him. He fell in the first campaign of that remarkable war which drove the French power from the banks of the St. Lawrence, and changed the destiny of this continent forever;—that war which opened the way, and hastened the advance, and educated the heroes of the Revolution. With equal abilities, with a larger experience, and a superior position to any of these—the favorite of the people and the idol of the army—what might not have been witnessed in his career, had his life been prolonged to the allotted age of man?

But his work was done! Doubtless, in the eye of Him, who sees all, and disposes of all, it was *well* done! And, Gentlemen, at the close of one hundred years from his death, on this spot, and in the clear light of what has already been accomplished by his dying bequest, shall we not also respond—"His work was well done!"

---

<sup>1</sup> "Sketch of Col. Williams"—Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., 1st Series, Vol. viii. This paper was written at Williamstown, during the life-time of many who had been the contemporaries of Colonel Williams.

Nay, as Williams himself sat in his sick chamber at Albany, and laid aside the pen with which he had made sure his last act of good will to his old neighbors and friends in the Hoosick valley, and contemplated its beneficent results in the higher intelligence and well being of their posterity in the future,—could the veil have been lifted, and his eye have run down the line of the coming years till it rested on these times, and marked the results as they now stand revealed to us ;—could he have seen the little hamlet of eleven settlers,<sup>1</sup> clustered about the Fort on this hill, give place to the populous village, and the broad, cultivated town ; and the frontier which he had defended so well, stretching onwards to the lakes, across the Western valley to the Pacific shore ; could he have beheld the Free School expanding into the College, and bestowing a liberal culture upon sixty generations of generous youth, sending them forth each successive year, equipped to do the work of men

“ On the world’s broad fields of battle ” ;

could he have caught a glimpse of yonder maple grove, and the haystack beside it, and the uplifted hands of those youthful heroes of a new crusade, pleading for a fresh baptism upon the churches ; and have seen the swift messengers of peace running to all lands, and publishing salvation—and the darkness lifting—and the day breaking—and heard the morning song ;—would he not also, with a full heart, have exclaimed :

It is well ! The ways of God are justified. I see ! There is a higher prize. I see ! There is a brighter glory. It is well ! Though my sun go down at noon, though I fall in the first shock of battle, and others lead on to victory, and win the soldier’s prize ; though my poor body sleep long years in the deep woods, and no kindly tear fall, and no friendly foot

---

<sup>1</sup> “ We are eleven families.” Petition in Mass. Milit. Records, Vol. viii. p. 234.

press the spot ;—yet I shall not be forgotten. The men of other ages, and far off lands, shall repeat my name with a blessing ; it shall live with Mills on the ocean, with Hall on the “ burning strand ;” the monumental marble shall speak it ; and the sweet valley which I love, and the everlasting mountains around, shall guard and preserve it forever.



# P O E M ,

B Y

E . W . B . C A N N I N G , E S Q .

---

THE silent march of years ! How shadowy  
Their footfalls lie upon the lengthening path  
Of ages ! In the horizon of the Past  
The cloudy summits of lost cycles rise,  
Like cumuli, far onward to the point  
Where distance vanishes in dreaminess.  
The roseate colors of our better days  
Chequer their tops and intervalles, and fringe  
The traces of the tempests that have rolled  
In Passion's war, or Sorrow's midnight hour,  
And rioted among them. There the halls  
Of Memory are builded, populous  
With busy phantoms. There remembered joys  
Flit like the murmurs of angelic love,  
On Adam's ear in Eden, ere he fell.  
There Guilt, too, with her grim and hideous troop  
Of chattering spectres, glours. 'T was thence she came  
To haunt the crowned usurper's last, dark dream  
On Bosworth field, and breathe the withering curse —  
“ Let me lie heavy on thy soul to-morrow ! ”  
As roll our days, the histories wherewith

We grave their virgin tablets oft shall claim  
 Our re-perusal, and thrice happy they  
 Who read their deeds in sunbeams—not in fire.

We change : aye, not such as they find,  
 Do our years leave us. So old Flaccus wailed—  
 “ Mutantur tempora, cum illis nos  
 Mutamur ”—and we prove it, even here.  
 See WILLIAMS’ children, from their various homes,  
 By various fortune scattered, rallying come,  
 To take again their foster-mother’s hand,  
 As when, in days ‘ lang syne,’ she led their feet  
 Up Learning’s mazy paths ; her blessing laid  
 Upon their laureled brows, and said farewell.  
 We know the homestead : unforgotten still  
 Rise the old mountains, that with giant arms  
 Engird this vale of beauty. Hoosic’s stream,  
 Whose ripples with our bounding pulses chimed,  
 Still laves their bases with its changeless flow.  
 We need no guide to tell our way among  
 These fields and meadows, where our youthful eyes  
 Hailed the first verdure of returning spring ;  
 Nor on these hills, whose woods of thousand dyes  
 Looked gorgeous in the warm and mellow glow  
 Of Indian summer days, and prompted oft  
 The stolen ramble and rapt musing there.  
 Yonder still looms the venerable pile  
 Where Science wedded Mischief, and we all  
 Joyed in the merry bridal. There, of yore,  
*Nocturnally* we oftener fought with beasts  
 Of bloodier fangs than the Apostle met  
 At sorry Ephesus—and lived through all.  
 The flames have surged among those honored towers ;  
 But, like the fabled bird of ancient song,

Rejuvenated 'mid the leafy shades,  
Rise other halls to Learning.

But not so

Deals time with man : behold the witnesses !  
Fratres Alumni ! ye are not the men  
Whose names ye bore when College days were young.  
I see the silvered lock, the look of care,  
And Labor's furrows on your manly brows ;  
And yet, methinks, the comely grace of youth  
Hath comelier aspect now, that ye have met  
The shock of Life's great battle, and have proved  
Your stalwart arms, and the tried steel they bear.  
The stripling soldier then—the veteran now,  
Mayhap with armor dinted, but with hearts  
Strong for the conflict ye must finish yet.  
Ye've seen in fields of honorable toil  
Full many a comrade fallen, and your van  
In shattered columns stands ; but there is still  
A baptism for the dead—ye're not alone.  
Along their honored path, and up to heaven,  
Like pilgrims pass the venerable men  
Who watched our wayward youth : wisely they build,  
In life, their monuments of living hearts,  
And multiply themselves in those to come.  
Fathers,\* we greet you ! Here our *Lares* are—  
Our *penetralia* : here the altar-fire  
Of love burns ever brightly, and we lay  
Fresh incense on it now. And, honored sire,†  
Whose is its sacred ministry, accept  
The prayer engraven on our heart of hearts  
For thee—" ad cœlum serus redeas"—  
And, like the Prophet, leave thy mantle here !

\* To the Trustees.

† To the President.

Take we Imagination's wand  
     On yonder hill ; and lo !  
 There lies as lay this goodly land,  
     One hundred years ago.  
 The primal forest blooms and fades  
     Above the virgin mould ;  
 And through its deep and sunless glades  
     Gush torrents uncontrolled.  
 Along the hills there prowls the bear,  
     And wild deer bounding go ;  
 While wilder men their freedom share  
     With tomahawk and bow.  
 The tangled wilderness unbroke  
     By settler's axe hath been ;  
 Nor yet doth the rude cabin's smoke  
     Tell of the pale-faced men.  
 No busy wheels of industry  
     Doth Hoosic's current turn ;  
 These lawns the fenced boundary,  
     And plow had yet to learn.  
 What prophet, in this forest tomb  
     Of Nature, might foresee  
 Anon the vivifying womb  
     Of thousands yet to be !

There stands, amid the solitude,  
     A man of soldier's mien ;  
 Upon his sword, in thoughtful mood,  
     He leans and views the scene.  
 Of noble form and generous soul,  
     And daring high is he ;  
 His thoughts, with seer's prescience roll  
     Adown futurity.

He reads the time, when, cleared and tilled  
     Should be this beauteous vale ;  
 When happy homes should dot the field,  
     And nestle in the dale ;  
 When broad high-ways for many a mile  
     The war-trail should efface ;  
 And harvests wave and meadows smile  
     O'er the wolf's hiding-place.  
 Calmly his earnest thoughts review,  
     With philanthropic ken,  
 The record, wonderful and new,  
     Of his own countrymen.  
 The feeble germ at Plymouth rock,  
     Sown 'mid December's snows,  
 Unnurtured by the parent stock,  
     Hath blossomed like the rose.  
 Weak tens to mighty thousands grown,  
     An empire in a day !  
 Since the famed dragon's teeth were sown,  
     Who might such marvels say !  
 On wide futurity forecast,  
     His country's greatness lies ;  
 And, like a giant phantom vast,  
     Its bold proportions rise.  
 The unborn millions yet to be  
     Lords of this mighty realm —  
 How glorious their destiny  
     Could Virtue rule the helm !  
 But Virtue on Intelligence  
     Based and upreared must be ;  
 While Tyranny weds Ignorance,  
     And crushes Liberty.  
 Not in proud stone — the soldier said —

Be my remembrance shrined ;  
 Methinks a nobler praise is read  
 In educated mind.  
 I'll bid untrammelled thought go forth  
 With banners all unfurled ;  
 And speed the march of light and worth  
 Triumphant through the world.  
 To build fair Science' classic halls  
 I'll ope a heaven-blessed hand ;  
 And this sweet vale shall lift their walls,  
 A bulwark of the land.  
 As years elapse shall pupil youth  
 Go thence with noble aim ;  
 And Freedom, Virtue, Light, and Truth  
 Shall honor WILLIAMS' name.

\* \* \* \* \*

The tones of war ring through the land.  
 The soldier and his valiant band  
 Are summoned to the field ;  
 At the loud rattle of the drum  
 In martial haste the patriots come,  
 With souls unused to yield.  
 The pennon to the breeze is flung ;  
 Defiant words from every tongue  
 Are rolled against the sky.  
 Bright is the gleam of burnished arms,  
 While mingle with the wild alarms,  
 The approaching conflict's dreadful charms,  
 " Rescue "—the battle cry.  
 A foreign foe invades our soil,  
 The implements of peaceful toil  
 Must yield to those of war :

Leagued with the savage, lo ! he comes  
To desolate our rising homes—

Rouse ! meet him while afar !  
Marshaled, at length, in stern array,  
Northward along their desert way

Move the battalions on.  
New England breathes in every soul,  
As press they toward their distant goal—

The tranquil Horicon.  
Alas ! beside that beauteous wave  
Shall many an unreturning brave  
Find his last bivouac—the grave !  
In his lost home his name grow dim,  
And lone woods sigh his requiem !

An Autumn morning's mellow beam  
Breaks many a weary soldier's dream,  
As pouring through the mountain gorge,  
Like gold it glitters on Lake George.  
Soon with loud larum-notes are stirred

The echoes round ; the sentinels  
With ranger's practiced ear have heard  
The wily foeman on the hills ;  
And battle bides the full-born day,  
Should scouts reveal his secret way.

“ Rangers, be ready ! ” flies the word—  
The gallant WILLIAMS girds his sword,  
And, ere the order runs again,  
Stand waiting full twelve hundred men,  
Who forth as pioneers must go,  
The peril and the arrest to know.  
Anon the leader and his host  
In the dim forest aisles are lost.

Heard ye that roar,  
 As on the shore  
 Mad billows all their passions pour ?  
 Saw ye the lightning flash  
 Heralding that thunder crash,  
     Mid the deep wood's gloom ?  
 It is the noise of battling men !  
 Hark ! that volleyed surge again—  
     Knelling many a tomb !  
 The war-whoop is ringing !  
 The trumpet is flinging  
     Its rallying call.  
 Wild havoc is riding,  
 To many a heart guiding  
     The thunder-spel ball !  
 Mid forest leaves lying,  
 The fallen and dying  
     Stain earth with their gore !  
 Mid death-shots impending,  
 See valor attending  
 Those vainly defending  
     Who battle no more.  
 All hopeless the struggle !—the foemen o'erwhelm :  
 Alas for the bark that hath parted her helm.  
 They shall rally, shall conquer, ere daylight be o'er,  
 But thy sword, gallant WILLIAMS, shall lead them no more !

He who that field might now o'ergero,  
 Where Death his harvest reaped of wo,  
     And paled the warrior's brow,  
 Shall find the relics of the fray  
 Occasional along his way,  
     Upturned by spade or plow.



The battered bullet, and the bone  
 Of fallen friend or foe unknown —  
 Mayhap a rusted weapon shown ;  
 And look o'er smiling fields afar,  
 Where trod the iron heel of war.  
 That dark, sad, pool \* without a wave,  
 Of hundreds slain made easy grave,  
 Still lies as dark, as sad, as deep,  
 While lilies o'er its bosom creep,  
 Unconscious that their beauties grow  
 From the forgotten dead below.  
 The peasant leaves his toil to tell  
 Where the brave WILLIAMS fought and fell ;  
 And where beside the ancient path,  
 When battle's storm had spent its wrath,  
 Beneath a huge pine's whispering crown,  
 In forest grave they laid him down.  
 Hard by a giant boulder's side  
 They show the spot on which he died ;  
 And on its summit, tall and lone,  
 Now stands the monumental stone,  
 To tell the traveler from afar  
 That ingrate, we no longer are.

\* \* \* \* \*

In Time's great volume turn we now the leaves  
 Of fifty years. How mighty is the change !  
 Dread War's ensanguined clouds no longer stain  
 Our country's sky ; the Mayflower's feeble band  
 Numbers in Freedom's nationality  
 Its thronging millions. Hoosic's fertile vale  
 With homes of sturdy yeomanry is filled.

\* "Bloody Pond," into which a multitude of the dead were thrown.

The wooded hill-top, where the soldier mused,  
 Bears the proud structure that records his name.  
 Already his munificence hath sent  
 Its banded ranks of educated mind,  
 To build his trophies and to crown his fame.  
 The Court, the Senate, and the sacred Desk  
 Are eloquent of WILLIAMS, and the prayer  
 That swelled his noble heart hath answered been.

Within those walls sojourning is a plain  
 And unpretending man ; no genius lights  
 His hardy features ; no ambition prompts  
 To write his name with magnates, or to walk  
 In honor's blazonry. A nobler aim  
 Stirs the deep currents of his soul, and marks  
 His tranquil brow with pregnant thoughtfulness.  
 To him life seemed no transcendental myth,  
 But stern reality — too brief to waste,  
 For trifling all too solemn, and bestowed  
 For high resolves ; for pure and holy ends ;  
 For godlike acts, and heavenward tendencies.  
 Deeply his soul had quaffed the blessed fount  
 Of Inspiration, and had learned of Him  
 Whose mission was — to save. With love-lit eye  
 He looked upon the nations, and his heart,  
 Swelling with gratitude to God, gushed forth,  
 In earnest longings for benighted men.  
 In the locked chambers of his inner life,  
 Where with his Maker he communed alone,  
 First caught his ear the Macedonian cry,  
 And there he answered it. The martyr-fire  
 Enkindled his devotion : all forgot  
 Was sordid self in longings for the lost.  
 What shall be done ? and how ? the doers — who ?

These were his soul-plied queries, and he sought  
 Counsel and wisdom at that oracle  
 Which erst dwelt 'neath the mystic cherubim,  
 And flashed in truthful glory from the gems  
 That lighted God's own people.—It was given.

Not the proud palace halls of kings,  
 Where Grandeur flits on gilded wings ;  
 Not the famed Temple's gorgeous pale,  
 Where Splendor spread her golden vail ;  
 But humble Bethlehem's lowly stall  
 Witnessed thine advent, Lord of all !  
 Not in the tall cathedral, where  
 Music and incense smother prayer ;  
 Not in the councils of the great,  
 Where sages brood the affairs of state ;  
 But in a heart the proud might scorn,  
 Was the blest Cause of Missions born.

Together from yon halls go forth,  
 To seek the meadows on the north,  
 Five noble and heroic men —  
 (Heaven grant their glorious like again !) —  
 With glowing heart, and willing hand,  
 And MILLS, the hero, leads the band.  
 Of kindred souls and purpose one,  
 Unused stern duty's call to shun,  
 Retired among the new-mown hay,  
 They go to counsel and to pray ;  
 And ask, with hearts devoted, true,  
 " What wilt thou, Lord, have *us* to do ? "  
 There hold they converse sweet and long ;  
 There form they deep resolves and strong ;  
 And, (so to Faith 'tis given,)

The Prophet's angel host was there,  
 Unseen amid the charmed air,  
 That gushing forth of soul to bear  
     On joyful wing to Heaven.

'Tis done—the day of jubilee  
 Hath dawned, O Heathendom, on thee !  
 Rejoice ! the morn millennial breaks,  
 And the deep sleep of ages wakes ;  
 Joy to thee, Africa ! thy sons  
 Shall sit among the ransomed ones !  
 Man owns, at length, his brother man :  
 Ye sunny plains of Hindostan,  
 A brighter reign awaiteth you,  
 Than Juggernaut's or dark Vishnu !  
 Persia ! behold again the star  
 Your Magi erst beheld afar !  
 Burmah, and barbarous Anam,  
 Shout to your neighbor, far Siam !  
 China, with teeming millions vile ;  
 Ye lands along the classic Nile ;  
 Ye distant Islands of the Sea—  
 Where'er the enslaved of Earth may be,  
 Rise, shout, and gather with the free !

Oh MILLS ! 'tis not my humble lays  
 Can duly celebrate thy praise.  
 Thou hast a tongue in every clime,  
 And in the voice of latest time  
     Thy record shall go down.  
 Pagans redeemed, around the Throne,  
 Attest the triumphs thou hast won,  
     And gem thy starry crown.

Old Ocean holds thy wasted frame ;  
 No marble *yet* records thy name ;  
       But thy renown is blent  
 With every surge that sweeps the shore,  
 And its wide waves round earth that pour  
 Shall be of thee forevermore  
       A fitting monument.

Oh, if those spots where men have died  
 By thousands, whelmed in battle's tide,  
       Claim lasting memory,  
 Methinks the place where prayerful thought  
 Thy glorious conception wrought,  
       Blest MILLS, should honored be.  
 And surely, if on earth be found  
 Precincts that men call "hallowed ground,"  
 'Tis where, to earnest pleading given,  
 Sweet Mercy's angel stooped from Heaven,  
 And blessed the cause that shall once more  
 To man his Eden lost restore.

Happy the day whose morning sun  
 Shall such memorial dawn upon !  
 Happy the sons of Williams, who,  
 Aiming such noble task to do,  
 Shall, not the "field of fame" desire,  
 But to the fame of FIELD\* aspire.

Such, Alma Mater, are thy trophies ! such  
 The bright example of one laureled son !

\* Hon. D. D. Field, of New York, with whom originated the project of the "Mission Park," in honor of Mills and his associates, on the site of their place of prayer.

'Tis written on the empyrean, and there  
 Have nations read the power of sacred love,  
 Its mighty conquests and its vast results,  
 In one devoted soul that grace inspires.  
 Man's puny arm, infantile in itself,  
 Wields giant power, when the Omnipotent  
 Braces its sinews. Then Goliath falls  
 Before the youthful shepherd and his sling :  
 Then the maimed patriarch from an angel e'en  
 Extorts the benison. True heroism  
 Grows of stern purpose ; a strong sense of right ;  
 A will indomitable ; energy,  
 And courage quailing not though hosts oppose.  
 These make the man a hero ; these compose  
 The moral enginery whose moral power  
 Heaves Error's walls cyclopean. Mountains huge  
 Before it dwarf to molehills : obstacles,  
 And strong adversity but spur it on,  
 Waking fresh lust of triumph. If but Truth  
 Guide the vast engine, woe betide the wrong  
 That bides its coming ! It shall fall anon,  
 A hideous ruin, and its boasted strength  
 Go up, like dew, before the summer sun.

Here lay thy glorious vigor, saiuted MILLS !  
 Religion was its life ; its breath was prayer.  
 What are the laurels of the conqueror,  
 Compared with thine ? All humble though thou wert,  
 Thou 'rt written with the mighty on the rolls  
 Of God's elect. 'T was thou that laidst the train  
 Of vast events, whose sequences are told  
 In the bright calculus of Heaven ! 'T was thou  
 Didst ope in darkened Heathendom the path

Of the famed stone of prophecy, unhewn  
 By human hands, that shall a mountain be,  
 And fill the earth. Heaven grant that, emulous  
 Of thy blest fame and its reward, and stirred  
 By equal love for lost and ruined men,  
 Thousands may go from yonder hallowed spot,  
 Like MILLS and HALL and RICHARDS — men whose souls,  
 Fired with devotion, shall the standard set  
 Upon earth's farthest mountains, where at last,  
 Shall the glad gathering of the nations be !  
 Lo, it is written — He that goeth forth,  
 The precious seed to scatter — though with tears,  
 Shall come again, rejoicing with his sheaves.  
 Long live the missionary spirit here —  
 The cradle of its origin ! and long  
 Be the twain benefactors unforgot —  
 WILLIAMS, whose hand munificently built  
 That honored pile, and MILLS, whose fervent heart  
 Enkindled it with fire evoked from Heaven !

Brethren Alumni ! pleasant hours .  
 Were those we spent in Learning's bowers ;  
 And pleasant now, though older men,  
 To tell the tales of youth again.  
 As on we tread the path of years,  
 Farther the vista-ed Past appears ;  
 But there are spots in Memory's dream,  
 Whose green and beauty never dim.  
 Such we recall with joy to-day,  
 And as we erst were taught to say —  
 “ Est bonum amavisse,”  
 Let Mantua's bard still ride our wreck

Of Latin — “forsan olim hæc

Juvabit meminisse.”

Dear Alma Mater, long as stand,

Like pillars of our native land,

These everlasting hills,

Thy grateful children shall proclaim

In every clime thy growing fame,

And deathless glory gild the name

Of WILLIAMS and of MILLS !

NOTE.—In the foregoing, although so prominent mention has been made of MILLS, as the originator of the cause of Foreign Missions in our country, I would by no means derogate from the worthy fame of his associates—James Richards, F. L. Robbins, Harvey Loomis, Byram Green and others, who were wont to unite with him in stated weekly prayer meetings in the fields and groves in the vicinity of College. But the unanimous voice of the American public has ever and correctly ascribed to Mills, the leadership of the glorious enterprise.

E. W. B. C.

LAB O 76

84-2













LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00023396695